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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PNAT](#) [KDEM](#) [PREL](#) [IO](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: UNAMI DEPUTY DISCUSSES DRAWDOWN

REF: A. BAGHDAD 4422

[1](#)B. USUN NEW YORK 2242

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Daniel V. Speckhard for reasons
1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: On December 12, DCM met with UN Deputy
Special Representative to the Secretary-General (DSRSG)
Michael von der Schulenburg to express strong concern over
the signal the UN decision to draw down UNAMI's in-country
staff would send and the ability of UNAMI to stay
meaningfully engage with such a drastic manpower cut.
Schulenburg stated that the decision had not a knee jerk
reaction, but based on legitimate security concerns and open
to re-evaluation if the security situation improved.
Schulenburg also expressed disappointment at the rapidly
eroding capacity of the Iraqi Election Commission and impact
this would have on the ability to hold Provincial Elections.
DCM stressed that the UN should revisit the decision, with
the goal of increasing its presence as soon as possible. END
SUMMARY.

UNAMI DRAW DOWN CONCERNS

[1](#)2. (C) On December 12, DCM Speckhard told DSRSG Schulenburg
that the US mission was very concerned over the reported UN
intention to significantly draw down UNAMI's staff in Iraqi
(Reftel USUN 2242). Stating that this decision, if
implemented, would send out a very negative signal to the
international community regarding the UN's commitment to
Iraq, DCM reiterated the international role and leadership
the UN played through UNAMI and how important it was to
remain engaged in helping Iraq. DCM expressed specific
concern and questioned Schulenburg on UNAMI's ability to make
an impact with such a reduced staff in key areas such as
constitutional reform and national reconciliation.

[1](#)3. (C) Schulenburg pushed back somewhat, saying that the
staff adjustment was not a knee jerk reaction, but a thought
out realignment. Schulenburg told DCM that the decision to
reposition began to take shape after the U.S. decision to
draw down staff in Basrah, "which sent a real shock to UNAMI
and the UN". Reiterating that security was the driving force
in the decision, Schulenburg confirmed to DCM that the lack
of overhead protection in UNAMI's housing compound was the
key issue, saying it would cost at least 33 million USD and
possibly as much as 40 million USD to construct. Schulenburg
told DCM that the UN and UNAMI remained committed to
maintaining sufficient personnel in country to be fully
engaged and indicated a staff of 65 would remain. (COMMENT:
Previous reporting placed the ceiling at 55, see Baghdad
4422; on December 13, UNAMI contacts told PolOff that this

number was being reconsidered at HQ UN and may be raised to ¶65. END COMMENT) In response to DCM request that UNAMI ask HQ UN to reconsider the realignment, Schulenburg said that the manning would be re-looked at in 3-4 months and adjusted if the security situation changed. DCM reiterated the importance of a strong UN presence in Iraq. He urged strongly that the UNAMI ramp up its presence to at least the previous level soon.

UNAMI CONCERN OVER THE ELECTION COMMISSION

¶5. (C) On the subject of possible provincial elections, Schulenburg told DCM that the difficulty the Council of Representatives (CoR) was having in passing the Iraq High Election Commission (IHEC) law was unforeseen. He expressed strong concern that the current election commission was rapidly losing capacity to hold elections and in danger of disintegrating completely if the law was not passed soon. DCM stated that the Embassy -- including the Ambassador -- had been very engaged in pressing the CoR in reaching a compromise to break a deadlock over the legislation. The Embassy expected the CoR to pass the resolution when a quorum of MPs is present again in January.
KHALILZAD